

**Claims**

1. A device for operating at least two discharge lamps (71, 72), having
  - 5 a first contact device for electrically connecting a first discharge lamp (71), which has two first incandescent filaments (711, 712),
  - a second contact device for electrically connecting a second discharge lamp, which has two second incandescent filaments (721, 722), and
  - 10 a current control device for controlling the current through the two first and two second incandescent filaments (711, 712, 721, 722), characterized
  - 15 in that terminals (22, 23) of the first contact device for one of the first incandescent filaments (712) are connected to terminals (24, 25) of the second contact device for one of the second incandescent filaments (721) together with a secondary winding ( $L_s$ ) of a
  - 20 transformer device in the circuit, and in that one terminal (21, 27), each of the first and second contact device for the respective other one of the first and second incandescent filaments (711, 722) are interconnected, with the interposition of the
  - 25 current control device (9), in series with the primary winding ( $L_p$ ) of the transformer device.
2. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which a resonance capacitor (8) is connected between the
  - 30 remaining terminals (20, 26) of the first and second contact device.
3. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which a series capacitor (12) for increasing the current for a
  - 35 preheating phase is connected in series with the current control device (9) and the primary winding ( $L_p$ ) of the transformer device.

4. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which the current control device (9) comprises a PTC thermistor.
5. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which the sequential starting capacitor ( $C_{seq}$ ) is connected in parallel with the first or second contact device.
6. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which there is connected to the device an inductor (6) with the aid of which the device can be operated in resonance in order to ignite the discharge lamps (71, 72).
7. An electronic ballast for operating discharge lamps (71, 72) having a device as claimed in claim 1.